YORICK's SKULL;

OR,

COLLEGE OSCITATIONS.

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YORICK's SKULL;

OR,

COLLEGE OSCITATIONS.

WITH

SOME REMARKS

ON THE

WRITINGS OF STERNE,

AND

A SPECIMEN

OF THE

SHANDEAN STILE.

By the AUTHOR of A MONSTROUS GOOD LOUNGE.

MORE SHE HAD SPOKE, BUT YAWN'D.
POPE's Dunciad.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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Edward Dell.
Brighton.

PREFACE.

I HAVE often lamented that men are not born acquainted with each other, for I do not know a heavier tax upon a diffident man, than a formal introduction. This, I find, is uſual, as well in the literary as the polite world.

To comply with the cuſtom, then, I was baptized on the twenty-ninth day of July, ANNO DOMINI 1756, as it ſtands recorded, in a very cramp hand, in the firſt leaf of the old family-

family-bible; which is carefully kept in a black-leather caſe, locked up in a private drawer with ſome godmother's gifts and a duſty bottle of uſquebaugh.

From that time to this, I have ſteered ſuch an even, regular courſe, that I cannot recollect one ſingle incident worth notice.

As to my temper, I believe I am upon a par with the reſt of the world: Indeed, it has never been out in a ſtorm. I am, by turns, philoſopher, poet, lawyer, and architect; juſt as my own humour or this Engliſh atmoſphere ſways me.

I have

I HAVE been two years a member of the univerſity, and have not yet commenced acquaintance with two books of ſolid philoſophical learning.

To ſpeak the truth, I think my time and converſation have been much better employed.

NEVERTHELESS, I cannot help expreſſing a high veneration for the characters of ſome of the old philoſophers, and for their very noble and inſtructive ſpeculations.

THE pungent and conciſe interrogations of Socrates, and the noble ſolidity

ſolidity of Plato, every one who can converſe familiarly with them muſt admire: But ſince, like our turnpike-roads, the way to knowledge is made every day more and more ſhort and eaſy, who in his ſenſes would think to ruin himſelf in oil, cotton, and green ſpectacles, and blunder through a dark narrow lane to no purpoſe? For, after all, what is philoſophy! ſince Epicurus, when a child, puzzled his maſter by a ſimple queſtion; and Hippocrates' ſon proved at four years old the circulation of blood, (which Hippocrates himſelf was ignorant of) by paſſing his finger over his hand!

But I am blaſpheming a ſcience which has been the whole ſtock of many a wiſer head than my own: It will be proper, therefore, to drop it. I am ſure, Rocheſter at a ſermon, or Ariſtotle at a puppet-ſhew, cannot be more out of their element than I am.

I shall beg leave, however, to hint at what the great Duke of Buckingham ſays on this ſubject; that "man is no more a creature fit "to find out abſtruſe matter, than a "fiſh is made to play a game at "bowls."

Just as abſurd as the rigid philoſopher, in my opinion, is the ſedate gentleman, who will ſuffer his eyes to be almoſt put out with the duſt of antiquity, for the ſake of enjoying and unravelling *aunciente hieroglyphics* and *blacke lettere converſation*. I once ſaw one of theſe moth-eaten mummies in ſtate; and he put me ſo much in mind of a primitive father in braſs, ſtuck againſt the wall of a cloyſter, that I could not help looking down at his feet for the "Orate "pro animâ."

By this time you muſt have a pretty clear idea of my opinion in reſpect

ſpect to ſtudy. I confeſs I ſhall always prefer rambling from one ſcience to another, extracting the neceſſary ſweets of each; but no more acquainted with their particular rudiments, than a bee is with the nature of the flowers which enrich him.

Being willing, laſt Winter, to make an attempt at ſomething ſolid, I ſat to work upon Locke's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding; who, according to Voltaire's opinion, "is "the only philoſopher who has un- "derſtood himſelf in writing upon "a ſubject, and the only one who "has made himſelf underſtood by

" others."—I ſucceeded very well for a few days; and abſolutely let my fire go out more than once without taking notice of it: But one unlucky evening, a favourite tune from the ſolitary fiddle of a neighbouring garretteer broke the chain of my attention, overthrew my whole ſtore of philoſophy, and for more than half an hour put a full ſtop to *infinitude* and *eternity*.

After this ſudden defeat I made other attempts; but they were ſo broken and unſatisfactory, that I entirely gave up all thoughts of ſucceſs, and returned quietly to my old courſe, careleſſneſs and the claſſics.

In

In the firſt of theſe I made ſuch a progreſs, that in the courſe of this year I have uſed twenty leaves of Watts's Logic, and a whole volume of Triſtram Shandy, in lighting fires and candles; beſides a variety of uſeful and valuable papers, on other urgent and neceſſary occaſions.

INVENTORIES I deteſt; they only ſerve to torment a man, by making him ſenſible of his loſſes, without putting him in a way to recover them.

A FRIEND of mine told me, the other day, that he never enters my room but it puts him in mind of Exeter-

Exeter-'Change, or the great auction-room in Queen-Street; where books, linen, and other effects, lie promiſcuouſly, to be viewed by thoſe who are fond of driving hard bargains.

If a ſtranger ſhould at any time accidentally look in upon me, he would imagine I was at leaſt preparing for the grand tour.

I begin, however, now to find it neceſſary to grow a little more careful, and have at length got into a regular method; for by theſe means, I am convinced, I ſhall ſave enough by next Winter to purchaſe myſelf a comfortable new blanket, and a hand-

a handſome pair of black velvet breeches.

I HAVE, I think, thus far, given a very explicative and honeſt account of the moſt ſingular parts of my character; would you know more of me, learn it from the following pages.

YORICK's

YORICK's SKULL.

ESSAY. I.

THE natural diffidence which every man feels, more or leſs, on his firſt eſſay after reputation, receives additional force from a variety of alarming circumſtances which preſent themſelves to his imagination, upon a minute ſurvey of this capacious theatre. He no ſooner enters,

than he finds himſelf ſubmitted entirely to the capricious determinations of the public voice. This ſlender and precarious dependance terrifies him beyond meaſure: Every unmeaning look or inſignificant geſture, is of ſufficient weight to encourage or condemn him. He remains in a moſt uneaſy ſtate, betwixt pleaſure and apprehenſion, till cenſure or applauſe puts an end to his viſionary torment. This unaccountable kind of modeſty is, at beſt, a very diſcouraging companion. In ſome men, it mixes and connects itſelf ſo intimately with all their faculties, as to render them timorous and ſuſpicious of every thing around them. A man of this unfortunate

tunate diſpoſition will meet with ſomething to confuſe or provoke him in the moſt ordinary occurrences. Every laugh will be a ridicule, and every whiſper an inſult upon his character. In ſhort, his life will be one continued chain of mortifications and embarraſſments: And I know of no remedy for it; unleſs, indeed, he would chuſe to turn monk or anchoret, and ſeek refuge from theſe imaginary impertinences of the world in a cloyſter or a wilderneſs.

It is a very common, but juſt obſervation, that diffidence is more immediately the growth of this country than of any other; which is rather

 wonderful,

wonderful, too, conſidering ourſelves as near neighbours to a people who never felt its diſagreeable influence. ---A friend of mine, I remember, once told me, he knew a country gentleman who was troubled with this ridiculous weakneſs to ſuch a violent degree, that going upon a viſit with his friend to a family in which he was an utter ſtranger, he earneſtly wiſhed to be introduced as a dumb perſon. His ſtrange requeſt was complied with: But, before they had been ſeated half an hour, the converſation happening to turn upon ſome rural ſubject, either quite forgetting himſelf, or thinking he was intereſted in the debate, the dumb gentleman uttered,

in

in a very articulate manner, for near five minutes; and had abſolutely produced two very ſolid arguments on his ſide, before he recollected that he had quite loſt the uſe of ſpeech. He was ſo confounded, that he was about to retire; when a good-natured gentleman who was ſitting at his right-hand, willing to make him perfectly eaſy, told his neighbour, in an audible whiſper, "it was not the firſt time an Aſs had been provoked to ſpeak." This, and the laugh which accompanied it, ſettled my gentleman, and made him dumb the reſt of the evening.---I ſhall here beg leave to hint, that I would not by this be thought to excuſe ſuch kind

of

of impertinent wit: On the contrary, I think it full as unbecoming to take inſolent advantage of a diffident temper in a man, as to ſhock the modeſty of a woman by rudeneſs and indelicacy.

I AM much pleaſed with the ſingularity of the French poet who wrote a critique upon each of his works immediately after its publication: For it appears to ariſe from that conſciouſneſs of imperfection, (or, as ſome ingenious writer obſerves, that modeſt ſelf-denial) which has a moſt excellent effect upon the ſenſe of other men towards us; and is of all qualities the moſt deſirable, for the agree-

able

able diſpoſition in which it places our own minds.

THIS amiable quality ſhould be ſtrongly recommended to every age and character: But it is of the laſt importance to a young adventurer; ſince it will be a moſt potent advocate for him with the public, and at the ſame time a modeſt apology for thoſe little blemiſhes and imperfections which cannot but appear in ſuch early ſpeculations.

THERE is not, perhaps, a greater mark of vanity in a young writer, than an affectation of ſolidity and correctneſs. It will be quite ſufficient,

at

at firſt, to draw pleaſing outlines; the agreeable diſpoſition of light and ſhade, and the laſt, ſoft, delicate touches, will be executed in a more maſterly manner, when care and obſervation ſhall have refined the judgment, and brought the mind to a nearer ſtate of perfection. A man of exquiſite taſte will diſcover more beauties, and receive higher ſatisfaction, in Raphael's firſt ſketch of the nativity, though a mere *ſbozzo*, than in that elaborate and ridiculous attempt at accuracy and boldneſs of ſtile, ſo evident in the Crucifixion by Andrea Sacchi, painted, as I am told, when he was nineteen.

After what has been ſaid, it may ſeem a bold and contradictory aſſertion, to ſay, that this kind of ambition is almoſt a merit, in compariſon with it's oppoſite temper, diffidence. But, I believe, every one will agree with me, when they conſider, that whilſt the former has only ſerved to expoſe the folly of thoſe who uſed it, the latter has frequently ſhaded in obſcurity men who might have been the moſt ſhining ornaments of their country. Many a one of this diſpoſition has been content to move quietly along in a mute proceſſion, when he might have acquitted himſelf with honour and applauſe in ſome principal and ſtriking character.

ALL philoſophers agree in telling us, that there are many very bright ſtars in the firmament, whoſe light never has, and probably never will arrive at our earth: But we have little cauſe to complain, ſince every thinking mind cannot but be filled with rapture and aſtoniſhment, at the preſent glorious and brilliant appearance of our hemiſphere!---Amongſt this variety of beautiful orbs, have I, a little attendant ſatellite, preſumed to mix my ſcanty portion of borrowed light. I ſhould have preferred Mercury for my maſter; but was told, that by preſuming to approach too near the ſun, he was ſwallowed up in a flood of glory. I have, therefore, placed myſelf

myſelf under the protection of Venus, and hope I ſhall not paſs unnoticed by the LADIES; who, in this country, have ſuch intereſt with the goddeſs, that a word from them, at any time, would prevent my being diſcarded. If it be my deſtiny to loſe their favour, having nothing to expect from the critical eye of a rigid philoſopher, who, perhaps, on the firſt winter night, will pronounce me too eccentric, I intend to ſtream away in a meteor; and ſhall be happy if thus I can, for one moment, attract the notice of the vulgar.

ESSAY II.

A MISCELLANY may very juſtly be compared to harlequin's jacket, which is generally made up of ſhreds and remnants of different colours, ſo diſpoſed as to amuſe the eye with a kind of regular variety. The pantomime itſelf is not a bad emblem of this unconnected kind of writing; for the changes are ſometimes ſo quick and wonderful, that we are ſurpriſed to find ourſelves conveyed, in the ſpace of a few minutes, through palaces, groves, cities, and cottages, variouſly entertained,

tained, either with the grandeur, ſimplicity, buſtle, or retirement, of every ſcene, in its diſtinct ſucceſſion.

A MISCELLANEOUS writer has this conſiderable advantage over all others, that he can prevent his ſubject becoming dull and inſipid, by changing it whenever it begins to be tedious and diſpleaſing to him. He has a full liberty to range over the pleaſant and extenſive garden of nature, and to gather whatever is moſt agreeable to his taſte or fancy. It is no wonder, therefore, if a young or warm imagination, ever impatient of reſtraint, ſhould be eager to expatiate amidſt

amidſt ſuch a boundleſs variety, and prefer roaming through ſcenes which are perpetually changing, to the fixed correct regularity which ever accompanies the chillineſs of age and preciſion of philoſophy.

THESE works are, in general, more calculated for entertainment than inſtruction. The ſeveral ſubjects have ſo quick and various a ſucceſſion, that the different impreſſions they make upon the mind, muſt of courſe be very faint and tranſitory. Any reflections upon a book of this kind, (unleſs it be very thoroughly digeſted) muſt have the ſame confuſed effect in the mind, as the picture of a variegated land-

ſcape

ſcape has upon the eye of a ſhort-ſighted man: He, indeed, has a general idea of the whole, and may diſtinguiſh trees from rocks, or land from water; but is incapable to diſcern, clearly, the particular beauties or imperfections of the piece. Theſe literary olios (to change my metaphor) ſhould rather be ſeaſoned to the taſte of the imagination than the judgment, which can ſit down with keener appetite, and more real ſatisfaction, to a regular regimen of plain diſhes. All methodical arrangements, complicated links of argument, or philoſophical diſcuſſions, are proviſions very ill-ſuited to the palate of ſo liquoriſh a gueſt as the imagination.

But

But thus, while we are uſing our beſt endeavours to avoid one extreme, we muſt be particularly careful not to entangle ourſelves with the other, and ſo become too vague and deſultory. In this caſe my book would not be unlike a number of pamphlets I once ſaw collected and bound up together; amongſt which, by way of connection, were ſix Love Elegies, a Treatiſe upon the Stone and Gravel, an Aſſize Sermon preached at St. Mary's, and two very excellent Receipts for making Lemon Pudding. Sudden tranſitions, I allow, are frequently very entertaining; yet they will no longer amuſe, than while they carry an air of probability and nature about

about them. Who, in his ſenſes, after reading a good ſound diſcourſe upon ſome text of Scripture, would think of employing his thoughts immediately upon the compoſition of a pudding? Or what inſtruction or entertainment could any one hope to receive, by running over, in the ſpace of an hour, an incoherent jumble of poetry, phyſick, divinity, and cookery?

ESSAY. III.

A CRITICAL REVIEWER is a being which once a month takes upon himſelf the office of univerſal judge and examiner. Where he reſides, is as yet a myſtery; though ſome imagine, (not without probability) that ſince he appears to be governed by the moon, he is one of her emiſſaries, and inhabits that planet. I hope, nobody will infer from this, that he knows no more than the man in the moon.

A WAG

A WAG obſerved, the other day, that an author could not be in a more critical ſituation, than under the hands of one of theſe gentlemen: And took occaſion to be very ſmart, at their expence; concluding his invectives, by ſhewing us an advertiſement he had drawn up that very morning. The poor gentleman ſeemed to me to be but juſt recovered from the diſtemper, himſelf, as he was very anxious for it's appearance in print. I begged a copy of him; and take this opportunity to oblige the public with it.

WHEREAS---To prevent all alarming accidents, as there never

was, time immemorial, lock or key to the ſtable of Parnaſſus, a certain number of public-ſpirited gentlemen have nobly offered their united ſervices to the people in general, to cure every one who is troubled with that dreadful diſtemper, called by the ancients *cacoethes ſcribendi*.

As the caſe ſavours ſomething of a madneſs, it is for the moſt part treated as ſuch; and once a month the patient, if very outrageous, receives a ſevere laſhing. It is a bitter remedy, we grant, and ſticks by ſome people

people worſe than a perpetual bliſter; but, it being *pro bono publico*, we make no doubt of ſucceſs.

N. B. No brimſtone is uſed. No cure, no pay, is not our concluſion, like quacks in other profeſſions; but we give notice, If you will pay well, you will be treated well.

ESSAY IV.

POOR Charles! I never think on thee, without the pleaſing recollection of thoſe hours we paſſed together, laſt Spring, under the friendly roof of a man, who, were his eſtate equal to his hoſpitality, would enjoy the moſt unlimited poſſeſſions.

How often, Charles, when the evening cloſes in a drizzling ſhower, in an idle fit of domeſtic melancholy, do I exclaim againſt fortune, for placing thee in a ſtation ſo obnoxious

to

to danger, where glory and deſtruction are almoſt inſeparable!——At this moment, methinks I ſee thee ruſh violently through the dreadful breach, undaunted by the groans of death, animated by the ſhouts of victory! Thy countenance tells me what a pang vibrates on thy tender heart, as thou lookeſt down upon that ſword, a dying father's only legacy, bluſhing with the blood of thy blind, unhappy countrymen!—— Every ſtreet and avenue are choaked with ſlaughter and deſolation!—— From a ſmall houſe, now ſcarce to be diſtinguiſhed through the ſmoke which ſurrounds it, the aged poſſeſſor, tottering under a ſcanty portion

of

of his goods, reſcued from the common wreck, was eſcaping with his wife and two ſmall children. Oft did they caſt a wild look of horror behind them; and, as the cries or ſhouts roſe frequent and loud on every ſide, ſtopped and gazed upon each other, with a ſteady look of patient reſignation—till, at laſt, a ruffian ſoldier!——Good Heaven! are theſe the privileges of war?——Oh! where will carnage and deſtruction end, if once the right of kings is to be defended by murders and aſſaſſinations!——His aged breaſt gapes with the recent wounds, and his grey hairs are ſcattered in the duſt; and thou, thou wretch, haſt obtained his

few

few poſſeſſions! Yet know, they will be as curſes, hereafter, to torment thee! for, in ſome dreadful hour of danger and deſpair, that hand which ſtruck the fatal blow ſhall deny thee it's aſſiſtance!

O, CHARLES! you ſee how fond the imagination is, when once heated, to aggravate the ſlighteſt circumſtances! My dear friend, ſhould it ever be thy lot to act in ſuch a ſcene as this, ſuffer not raſh revenge, and an unbecoming thirſt for impious glory, to hurry you away beyond the bounds of honour and humanity!—For Heaven's ſake, hold your cruel hand!—Strike not the poor, defence-

leſs, innocent wretch! — See how earneſtly he calls for mercy and forgiveneſs!—Surely it is enough that his hard fortune has reduced him thus low!—Will nothing move thee? O, he is the laſt ſurviving ſon of a diſtracted widow! That word thrills through thy very ſoul! Conſider, what would thy anxious mother feel, if thou, the only comfort of her age, ſhouldſt fall in thy career of glory! ——But to thee theſe admonitions are unneceſſary; therefore I will drop them.

One evening, I remember, as we were walking with the good old gentleman, in the grove adjoining to his houſe,

houſe, thou didſt conclude the artleſs hiſtory of thy family; parts of which we had heard thee relate at different times, as memory or opportunity permitted, with ſo modeſt and tender a narrative, that I never reviſited the place without admiring thy virtue; and there is a melancholy luxury even in the recollection of it. This evening it was ſo ſtrong in my memory, that I ventured to commit it to paper. It ran nearly in this manner.

" My poor father, when juſt ex-
" piring under the malignity of a
" fever, ſent for me into the room.
" I was then about ſixteen years old.
" As I approached the bed, 'Charles,'

" (ſaid he, fixing his eyes ſtedfaſtly
" upon me, and ſtretching his hand
" out for a ſword which was lying
" in the ſame chair with his regi-
" mentals) ' Charles! when your
" poor grandfather died, I was about
" your age: He left me all he had;
" earneſtly requeſting of me, as he
" delivered this ſword into my hand,
" that with the little money I ſhould
" receive in a few days, I would
" purchaſe myſelf a commiſſion in
" the army. This I neglected for
" ſome time, on account of my
" health; till, at laſt, an unlucky
" accident (my time is now too ſhort
" to relate it, thy mother will tell
" thee all) deprived me even of that
little!

" little!—From that time to this
" hour, near forty years, have I been
" a ſoldier of fortune; and you muſt
" be conſcious how ſparingly ſhe
" has dealt with me and your poor
" mother! Would it had been
" otherwiſe, my dear!' (fetching a
" deep ſigh) 'God knows, I have not
" much to bequeath thee!——Nay,
" do not turn aſide, my child!—A
" few minutes, and I ſhall look upon
" thee no more!'——Here, for ſome
" time, his voice failed—diſtreſsful
" interval!——he ſupplied it, by
" raiſing his feeble arm to wipe
" the tear from off my cheek, as I
" bent over him; which—when he
" had done——'Here, Charles!'

" (kiſſing

" (kiſſing the ſword twice or thrice)
" 'here' (ſaid he) 'is what I value
" more than all the gifts of fortune.
" When I called upon it for aſſiſ-
" tance, it never refuſed, and in the
" day of danger it never deſerted
" me! therefore I eſteem it;' (here
" he kiſſed it again;) 'and, I hope,'
" (continued he, raiſing himſelf upon
" his elbow, and leaning toward me
" with a look of inward ſatisfaction)
" 'I hope my boy will not conſider
" it in a worſe light, for not having
" paſſed unnoticed in the fields
" where Marlborough conquered!'—
" Squeezing it ardently into my hand,
" he ſtooped down to kiſs me---The
" tears which had long been trem-
bling

" bling in his eyes, as he closed them " in death, dropped."——Here let me stop; for the sequel must be cold and insipid from any mouth but thine.

Ever since, till these turbulent times, I remember, he kept it carefully locked up with his father's picture.——This is the first time, since the good man's death, his country has required it of him—— O! let it, then, be doubly keen and unerring in the day of battle, that he may restore it, loaded with victory, to it's noble companion.

He

He told me, one day, that nothing ſhould ever tempt him to part with either the picture or the ſword; for he ſhould not only then look upon himſelf as unworthy ſo great a father, but ſhould loſe many an hour of exquiſite contemplation: "For, whenever" (added he) "I behold the "picture, I am filled with veneration for the virtues of the father "and the man; while the preſence "of the ſword never fails to ſtrike "me with admiration at the unrivalled actions of the hero."

It's faithful blade would long ſince have been ſheathed in the ruſt of

of time, if he had not, once in two or three months, ſpent a few minutes in recovering a bright poliſh, for which, in his father's time, it was remarkable: And ſurely thoſe few minutes were not ill beſtowed!—— One morning I found him thus employed. I perceived the damp dew of the air had caſt a dimneſs over the blade, which ill became it: But it was like the voice of ſlander; which, for a time, may ſully the moſt innocent, till the hand of truth ſhall wipe off every blemiſh, and then it will ſhine forth with redoubled luſtre.

ESSAY V.

THE writings of YORICK bear viſible marks of a great natural genius, ſeaſoned with uncommon humour, and adorned with the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility.

MY opinion may perhaps appear ſingular; but I cannot help conſidering Triſtram Shandy rather as an admirable caricature of hiſtory, than an exact portrait of private life: A lucky attempt at "modeſtly overſtepping the modeſty of nature;" and of alluring mankind with flattering

decep-

deceptions, beyond the bounds of probability. This appears more ſtrongly in thoſe places where he ſeems deſirous to claim attention by pathos or ridicule. Let any one, after reading Le Fevre, aſk his own heart, whether Uncle Toby and the Corporal are not too tender and ſentimental? And, I think, the juſtly-admired amours of Widow Wadman never did or will have exiſtence, but in the brain. Yet it is by theſe means he has exceeded all writers in his knowledge of diſpoſition and character. By carrying us beyond our uſual feelings, he has taught us, that the human heart is capable of the greateſt improvement; and that nature never

feels herſelf more noble and exalted, than in the exerciſe of benevolence and humanity.

I AM well aware, that imitations of this irregular genius are laughed at, as abſurd and trifling. I grant, that to imitate (as many have done) nothing but his careleſs, parentheſis'd chapters, deſerves this cenſure; for in theſe he deſcends to ſillineſs and buffoonery: But in other parts, it is ſo much the natural language of the heart, that ſtories and opinions fall more eaſily into it than into any other kind of writing. I hate a man who preaches a ſtory, or delivers orthodox opinions any where but in the

the pulpit.——But, in order to illuſtrate what I mean by his careleſs, parentheſis'd chapters, which have no connection with any other part of the book, and (having neither meaning nor information) ſerve only to perplex a reader, I will give an example of them in the following chapter. That you may know how eaſy this kind of writing is, the whole chapter was compoſed *currente calamo*, and in the original ſtate ſent to the preſs. It concludes with ſome reflections after his manner; where, by being over ſentimental upon trifles, he runs into inſipidity and ridicule.

CHAP-

CHAPTER.

PRAY, Ma'am, have you a taſte for muſic?—I thought not——You would not have ſpent a whole hour in unpicking your queen's night-cap, the other morning, while the piano forte ſtood open at your back, but that gew-gaw paſſion for dreſs weighs down every other; and, I believe, you make no other uſe of Handel and Corelli, than the poor man did with a ballad who was troubled with a ſinging in his head.——Nay, you need not grin! for, in ſpite of all your care and labour, your teeth are ſtill a ſhade darker than the keys of

of your inſtrument.—Now I am ſo entirely wrapt up in muſic, that I talk and think of nothing elſe. That's a lucky thought—I'll write a letter to my taylor in London. Pſhaw! what an execrable pen! I don't know any thing ſo diſagreeable, except wiping your mouth with the corner of a new blanket.—Betty is tuning her pipes in the kitchen, as ſhe ſits hemming the bottom of an old callimanco petticoat. Plague take the wench! will nothing ſtop her mouth? I wiſh ſhe was married to Rauzzini!——May I die at a concert, if I have not made muſic the laſt word of my letter! I'll ſeal it, however—you muſt know,

my

my motto is a muſical one.——At the very inſtant, while I was applying ſeal to wax, with the right elbow turned outward from my body, and elevated to the height of my ſhoulder, ſtraining every muſcle of the arm, I recollected it. In a moment, down ſunk every idea, good or bad, like ſand to the bottom of a baſon of water; while muſic, like oil, ſwam upon the ſurface.—You may fidget, and blow your noſe, and look as croſs as you pleaſe, there is no way to get rid of it, but by going to bed. ——Muſic is one of thoſe arts (thought I, holding the extinguiſher over the candle, one foot in bed, the other on a Bath-rug carpet by the

ſide

ſide of it) which elevate the human mind.——I can never illuſtrate a ſubject that has been ſo well Handel'd already; ſo I'll hold my tongue. ——Here ſentiment took the reins—Could this candle, (turning round to the table on which it was ſtanding) could this candle be ſenſible of it's impending fate, how would the pointed flame, which now ſeems to ſtrain with eagerneſs to embrace and court deſtruction, and like "the "lamb licking the hand juſt raiſed "to ſhed it's blood," playing round the edge of the extinguiſher—how would it, I ſay, were it ſenſible of impending fate, ſhrink with horror from the touch; and draw back it's

trembling light, even till it's laſt momentary gleam was quivering in the ſocket! and, when that expired, a thin line of ſmoke would triumphantly aſcend, and bid a joyful defiance to it's diſappointed foe!——Here, how it happened I know not, but ſo it was, down dropped the extinguiſher!——I caught it haſtily up—It was too late!——The as yet enlightened ſnuff ſeemed to upbraid me.—I would have rekindled it.——I blew—no flame appeared;—on the contrary, I thought the little light rather diminiſhed than encreaſed.——I will not blow again——There is but one ſpark now remaining—It leſſens!——Is it gone?—No.——

I ſtepped

I ſtepped quickly into bed, that I might there ſee it expire.——I turned my head, but could not perceive it. ——I rubbed my eyes——It is gone——It certainly—is—gone!

ESSAY. VI.

WE have now attained the ſummit of the hill. Here let us ſtop, and wait with rapture and aſtoniſhment!——That glorious amber-coloured cloud, right before us, beſpeaks the ſun's appearance. Carry your eyes gradually round the horizon: Obſerve how imperceptibly, as you turn eaſtward, the brightneſs of the tints increaſes upon every cloud; and again, weſtward, how ſecretly it fades into a dim leaden hue.—— The moon, though not yet retired, cannot with her ineffectual light long

long endure the riſing ſplendour of the ſun.—I now perceive it's golden rim, peeping above the ſmooth unruffled ſurface of the ocean.—A faint gleam dances on the diſtant channel. More than half it's orb is now viſible. —Now it ſhines forth in full majeſty; reſting for a moment on the verge of the ocean, as if unwilling to leave it. —But ſee! a thin tranſparent cloud has ſeparated them.—How magnificently does it walk forth, throwing it's golden mantle acroſs the water! —To what a prodigious length is the ſhade of that ſmall veſſel, which lies at anchor ſome diſtance from the beach, extended!—Hark! the deep-mouthed hounds are out, and the

murmur

murmur increaſes behind us in the village.——The whole ſide of the hill, except where we aſcended, is lightly covered with a ſmooth ſhining web, woven by the innumerable inſects which inhabit it.—How beautifully is the proſpect at the bottom of the valley adorned with a thick crop of oriental pearl, reflecting ten thouſand coloured rays, terminated by that Gothic ſpire, which ſeems of gold, while upon it's top the ſhifting vane twinkles inceſſantly!——Let us purſue our walk, that we may return before it grows ſultry, for I feel the heat increaſing.

What a variety of beauty and nonſenſe has this ſubject occaſioned in all languages, and in all ages! I believe you will ſcarce find a poet, provided he writes a hundred pages, who does not undertake a deſcription of it. It is very certain, that nature never appears more beautiful and engaging than in this ſituation. The enlightened air glows with celeſtial mildneſs, and the whole face of the creation is cloathed in ſuch a ſplendid tranquility; that it is no wonder the muſes, fond of this peaceful ſeaſon, made it the celebrated ſubject of their divine harmony.

Descriptions of this ſort are, I believe, more common in our own language than in any other. Our very ballads and ſongs abound with them: The ſportſman will rouze you with

" The ſun from the Eaſt tips the mountains
" with gold"—

And the lover with

" The little birds on every ſpray
" Salute the riſing ſun"—

And yet, I dare venture to affirm, there are not four people out of ten, who, ſince they were at ſchool, ever ſaw the ſun riſe. Nay, I make no doubt but there is many a fine gentleman at the Weſt end of the town, and

and many a poor ſmokey cockney under the influence of Bow-bell, who, where he put to the oath, would long be at a loſs to determine whether there be ſuch a thing in nature as a drop of morning dew, or whether it be only a mere poetical fiction.

ESSAY VII.

DURING my ſhort viſit, laſt Spring, at Mr. W———'s country-ſeat in Devonſhire, I was much pleaſed in obſerving, on one hand the reſpect and gratitude of all the villagers towards him; and, on the other, his benevolence in relieving their wants and encouraging their labours. In the midſt of ſuch a ſcene of rural hoſpitality, I could not avoid frequently reflecting upon Sir Roger de Coverley, and fancying myſelf in full enjoyment of thoſe deſcrip-

deſcriptions which I have ſo often read with envy and delight.

One morning I was witneſs to a ſcene, which filled me with ſuch wonder and veneration that I could not help committing it to paper. The ſubject would be an ornament to a much abler pen.

We had ſcarce finiſhed breakfaſt, when the ſervant entered with a neat wicker baſket, whoſe contents were modeſtly hidden under the covering of a few fine leaves.

"What haſt thou there, Joe?" cried Mr. W——, laying down

his napkin, and riſing from his chair.)

" Why, Sir, a mortal fine pine-
" apple the poor old gardener has
" brought, and hopes you will ac-
" cept of, in return for your kind-
" neſs to his wife when ſhe was ill.
" He hopes your honour won't take
" it amiſs."

" 'Tis a very fine pine, to be
" ſure." (Lifting up the vine leaves, and holding out the baſket.) " Here,
" Joe, the firſt time you go down
" the village give him this crown—
" You remember what is ſaid in
" Scrip-

" Scripture of the poor widow's " mite?"

" Yes, your honour: And, I " warrant, the old gardener in the " entry"——

" In the entry, Joe?—What, has " the poor man been ſtanding all " this time in the entry?—Call him " in immediately, and take down " the fruit."

This gentle rebuke called up a bluſh in Joe's face, which ſeemed to ſay he would remember for the future: So, ſending the gardener into the parlour, he retreated.

Now

Now Joe having a very liquoriſh tooth, and his ſituation in life preventing it's being indulged as often as he could wiſh, it is very natural to ſuppoſe that the ſmell, nay even the ſight, of ſuch delicious fruit, muſt have excited his deſires, and awakened his appetite. His longings were, indeed, very craving: But having a pretty good ſhare of religious principles, together with a retentive memory, he recollected that the vicar, not a week before, had in an excellent ſermon commanded him to withſtand temptation. He always paid great regard to what the vicar ſaid; and being ſomewhat ſcrupulous about breaking the Scriptures, at

at laſt ſuffered his virtue to get the better of his inordinate deſires: So, ſetting down the baſket in the cooleſt place he could find in his pantry, returned to the kitchen fire.

After wiping his ſhoes upon the mat, the old gardener walked into the parlour. The long courſe of ſeventy years had given a venerable appearance to his figure. A regular and temperate manner of living had kept him entirely free from the inconveniences and complaints which generally attend a man ſo far advanced in life.——Time had ſpread his ſnow upon his head; yet had not wiped off ſo much of the vermilion from

from his cheeks, but that enough ſtill remained as an index to an healthy and unimpaired conſtitution. —His eyes ſtill are very clear: But, upon Mr. W——'s obſerving to him, the other day, that he had miſſed him for two or three Sundays at church, he told him he had changed his old ſeat in the aiſle, directly under the clerk's deſk, and was removed nearer the altar, for that he found he could not ſee quite ſo clear as uſual; adding, he feared he muſt ſoon take to ſpectacles. He is rather above the middle-ſize; and in his younger days, I have heard, was accounted the tighteſt man in the pariſh——No pariſh regiſter can be

of

of greater ſervice to the common people; for, by remembering families and dates, he is applied to by them to decide all their quarrels and debates. He is the only man, too, who can remember the vicarage houſe being rebuilt: And boaſts of having rung the tenor bell, in the firſt peal they ever had in the tower, given by the lord of the manor, ANNO DOMINI 1726; whoſe name ſtands recorded at the head of the liſt of benefactors, written in golden letters on each ſide of the ſingers gallery.

"WHY did you ſtand in the entry, "good man?" (ſaid Mr. W——, as he was entering the parlour.)

" BLESS your honour!" (returned he, bowing reſpectfully) " I only " made bold to call with my poor " wife Dorothy's dutiful reſpects, " begging your acceptance of a ſmall " trifle. She hopes your honour " won't be diſpleaſed."

" DISPLEASED! God forbid, good " man!—But how is your wife?"

" YOUR honour is too good!— " God be thanked, ſhe is much " better than when your honour " ſaw her; but I fear ſhe will never " be rightly well again!"

" O,

" O, never deſpair! — we muſt " hope for the beſt."

HERE the poor man ſhook his head; and, while the faint gleam of a ſmile ſpread over his face, made no other reply, than—" Ah! your " honour!"

" WHEN the weather becomes a " little more ſettled, and ſhe can " venture out, I dare ſay ſhe'll do " very well again.—Tell her I am " much obliged to her for her pre- " ſent, and will come and ſee her " either to-morrow or next day. In " the mean time, if either you or

" ſhe ſtand in need of any thing,
" I deſire you will apply to me."

During this ſpeech, the old man, by numberleſs means, had endeavoured to expreſs his gratitude—By bowing, laying his hand to his breaſt, and taking the opportunity of each interval to pronounce—" Heaven bleſs your honour!"

Surely gratitude like this invites the hand of benevolence! for where does liberality find a more noble reſtitution than a grateful heart!

When Mr. W—— had finiſhed, all the poor gardener could reply was—

was—" Indeed, your honour, I am
" quite aſhamed! You have done
" too much, already, for us!"

" I HAVE done nothing but my
" duty, good man; and make no
" doubt, were our circumſtances in
" life changed, you would have
" done as much for me."

" I HOPE I ſhould, your honour:
" And I believe I may anſwer pretty
" ſafely for poor Dorothy; for I
" have heard her ſay, an hundred
" times, ſhe would not grudge walk-
" ing ſix miles, to hear our vicar
" preach ſuch another ſermon as he
" did

" did laſt Whitſunday, concerning
" the good Samaritan."

" I CAN anſwer for her, myſelf,"
(ſaid Mr. W——, interrupting him)
" and I am ſure I can never do too
" much for one who has ſo good a
" heart."

" SHE has a good heart, indeed,
" your honour!"——

A COACH at this inſtant ſtopping at the gate, put an end to the converſation. Mr. W—— aroſe; and, wiſhing his wife better, diſmiſſed him. I ſaw him, at the door, put ſome money into the gardener's hand:

I be-

I believe he was conſcious of it; for, as he turned round, he ſeemed a little confuſed. I ſaw the old man, as he paſſed the window, kiſs the money; and, as he put it into his pocket, utter a prayer for his benefactor.

I CANNOT leave this ſubject, without ſpeaking of a viſit I paid him ſome few mornings after, to enquire his wife's health, by deſire of Mr. W——; who, knowing I am fond of conſidering ſuch ſcenes of rural ſimplicity, told me I ſhould meet with ſufficient matter for agreeable reflections.

As I walked down the lane which leads to his cottage, I met two children of his; who, by their ſhining morning faces and clean apparel, I ſuppoſed were going to ſchool. They ſtopped full before me, and made a moſt humble obeiſance.—I had proceeded within a few paces of the gardener's wicket, when a little boy who was ſtanding there with a large ſlice of bread and butter in his hand, upon ſight of me ran immediately into the houſe, to inform them of their viſitor.

It was one of thoſe modeſt manſions, which would perhaps paſs unnoticed in a leſs retired ſituation; but

but in the ſequeſtered ſpot where it now ſtands, could not fail to attract the wandering eye, and ſtrike the penſive mind with a ſtrong and pleaſing idea of the calm content and unambitious tranquility of it's humble tenant.—It was a roof under which humility herſelf might have fixed her reſidence—but much too low for the lofty head of pride to enter.—It bore the date of many years upon it's cruſted walls; but that, like the wrinkles on it's maſter's brows, ſerved to increaſe it's beauty. The ivy, which in many parts ſpread very thick over the walls, ſeemed as if ſent by ſome protecting angel, to defend them againſt

the rude aſſaults of time, and to ſupport them in the hour of decay.

I was caſting my eyes towards the thatched roof, where a great quantity of birds were gathered, as if conſcious of ſecurity and protection, when the gardener's wife appeared at the wicket, with a courteous ſmile upon her face. She dropped a curtſey to me; which, though once perhaps more graceful, was never more ſincere; and hoped I would honour her ſo far as to ſtep in and reſt myſelf.—I ſurveyed her attentively as ſhe approached towards me. Here was a large field for meditation.—— I looked upon the hoary locks which graced

graced her head, as upon the laſt faint beams of the ſetting ſun, with ſorrow and veneration.—Upon her countenance, as upon ſome curious fragment of antiquity; in which, having traced the outlines of what once was beautiful, it cauſes an inward ſatisfaction; I reflect on what it was, and thank the hand of time for ſparing me ſo much.—Upon her garments, as upon the ſpotleſs robes of innocence and virtue; for they were ſuch as decency herſelf might not bluſh to wear.——I was ſo taken up with theſe reflections, that without anſwering I followed her to the cottage.

I could not avoid being much ſtruck with the neatneſs of the kitchen: But, as we only paſſed through it to a ſmall room that fronted the garden at the back of the cottage, I had not time to make particular obſervations. My eyes, however, were attracted towards the fire-place, by a large dog; which, diſturbed from a ſound nap, at my entrance, lifted up his head, and grumbled out his diſpleaſure: But being at laſt conſcious, I believe, of no ill deſign againſt the family, or by reaſon of ſome threatening reproof from his miſtreſs which eſcaped me, as I paſſed by, laying his head upon his two fore-paws, which were ſtretched out almoſt

moſt parallel to each other before him, he turned his eyes upward to my face, and wagged his tail. I bent down and ſtroked the animal for his affability, and then proceeded.—The dreſſer, tables, chairs, the pewter, braſſes, and every ornament over the chimney-piece, manifeſtly bore the marks of care and induſtry.

When I entered the room, I was much pleaſed with ſeeing a little girl at work in the window-ſeat; and cloſe at her feet a boy of about the ſame age, with one of Mr. Newbery's pennyworths of learning in his hand, both buſily employed. A looking-glaſs in a black varniſhed frame

frame adorned one ſide of the room, and reflected a ſheet almanack which hung oppoſite to it, juſt over a ſmall bureau ſufficiently capacious for their uſe.—Their religion and loyalty were both ſhewed in their choice of ornaments; for the walls on each ſide were variouſly profaned with conſumptive angels, diabolical ſaints, and martyrs in maſquerade; while on either ſide of the chimney his preſent gracious majeſty, and his royal conſort, were hung in effigy.—During theſe obſervations the gardener entered the room, wiping his fingers on the corner of his blue apron.

I STAID

I STAID no longer than to execute my commands; and, having gained a ſatisfactory anſwer, returned.

UPON my way home, among other reflections, I thought I never ſaw any ſubject on which the inexpreſſible delicacy of Horace's Simplex Munditiis could have been more properly beſtowed.

I HAD ſcarce turned the corner of the lane, when the village clock ſtruck eight—I had juſt counted the laſt ſtroke, when, caſting my eyes upon the ground, I perceived that I was ſqueezing, under my right-foot, half the body of a ſmall worm.

The

The poor inſect, by the writhing of it's body, muſt have been in incredible agony. It's ſlender form was twiſted into every poſition which might ſeem poſſible to deliver it from the weight of ſo deſtructive but innocent an oppreſſor! —— I caught my foot haſtily up. As ſoon as it felt itſelf releaſed, with what little ſtrength remained, it began to ſlide forward, drawing it's mangled length ſlowly after, towards a ſmall hole in the ground; from whence, no doubt, it had lately crawled forth to enjoy the moiſture of the morning, and to be a partaker of thoſe benefits which the bountiful hand of Providence ſheds impartially alike upon

upon all his creatures—And, in a moment!——Good God!—It is ſo ſtrong a reſemblance of what happens daily in human life, that it will not bear ſo cloſe a reflection as my tongue was about to beſtow upon it!——So I let my cane drop careleſsly back upon my right-ſhoulder; and in this poſition arrived ſafe at the end of the walk, juſt at breakfaſt-time.

I CANNOT leave the country, without relating another adventure which happened during my reſidence with Mr. W——. I had ſupped one

evening with a family in the village; and returning home rather earlier than uſual, I thought, as the moon ſhone exceedingly clear, that I would take a walk before I entered the houſe.

At the bottom of the garden there is a ſmall gate, which opens into a pleaſant meadow: By croſſing this you are brought to a moſt delightful beach, from whence you command a moſt extenſive proſpect both by ſea and land. On each ſide it is ſkirted with woods and rocks, riſing to a moderate eminence. In the front it ſeems to lie entirely open, unbounded by any view but ſky and water: But

on

on a very clear day, a long uneven ridge of blue misty mountains may be seen just peeping above the horizon; and, at the distance of about nine miles, a small castle, built upon a neck of forest land, projecting out almost as far as the channel.—The eye would find little amusement in this part of the prospect, was it not for the number of ships of all burdens which are continually crossing this opening into the channel.

About two hundred yards to the left of the meadow stands a venerable pile of ruins, the last sad remains of some religious abbey!—Thither, along the beach, I directed

my walk. —— The ſolemnity and ſtillneſs of the night ſeemed to increaſe as I approached thoſe mouldering towers; and the ſilent ſerenity of the full-orb'd moon, caſting over them the mildneſs of her ſilver light, added ſuch an awful luſtre to the melancholy ſcene, that I was filled at once with reverence and aſtoniſhment.— "The buſy hum of men" was huſhed: The whole creation round would have ſeemed mute and motionleſs, had not the ear been awakened, at unequal intervals, by the light ſplaſhing of the ſwelling tide, as it encroached upon the glimmering ſhore. Through the populous city, and the ſequeſtered village, ſcarce

ſcarce an eye remained uncloſed in gentle ſleep.—I now found myſelf overſhadowed by the high o'erhanging fragment of a Gothic gateway. Half of it had already fallen a victim; but time ſeemed willing to ſpare the other half, as a noble monument of it's former magnificence.—In every niche, as I paſſed ſlowly by, ſome rude miſhapen remnant of a pious ſaint, ſome mitred father hourly decaying under the ſpungy moſs which covers him, was preſented to my view; illuſtrating the vanity of human grandeur.—O! if the time ſhould ever come, when, wandering from the gay and giddy croud, ſick of the inſipid world, the

ſpeckled

ſpeckled form of vanity will viſit this unfrequented ſpot! then, as ſhe caſts her eyes upon yonder moulder-ing image, a penitential ſigh for for-mer follies will waft her ſins toward Heaven, in hope of pardon; and, ere they arrive, the balmy breath of innocence, like a proſperous breeze, will aid their progreſs! Then, when they enter, they will ſmell ſo ſweetly of repentance, that they ſhall ſtand recorded high on the liſt of virtue, as everlaſting teſtimonies of ſincere contrition! —— As I turned ſhort round a corner of the aiſle, by the light of the moon, which ſhone very bright through an old Gothic win-dow at the end of the cloyſter, juſt before

before me, I perceived ſomething lying at the foot of one of the columns: At firſt it looked like a piece of the ruin; but how great was my aſtoniſhment, when, coming within a yard of the place, I diſcovered it to be a poor woman, with an infant in her arms, as I thought, faſt aſleep. — The coarſe tattered remnant of a blanket was wrapped round her emaciated body; with one arm reſting upon the low baſe of a mouldering column, ſhe ſupported her defenceleſs head: With the other ſhe embraced her tender infant, whoſe innocent cheek was reclining on it's mother's breaſt.

Art not thou my fellow-creature! (exclaimed I;) and is this, poor wretch, thy habitation!—When the winds whiſtle, and the tempeſts roar, is this the only ſhelter thou canſt find! When the rain beats hard, and pitileſs ſtorms deſcend, is this thy only covering!—— Even the beaſts have caves for ſhelter, and ſecret places to ſlumber in; why, then, are thy almoſt naked limbs expoſed to the inclement elements! Why are the clouds thy only canopy, and the cold earth thy pillow! O, thou art poor indeed!——It could not be thy crimes which have brought thee to this; thou art not capable to commit any!

My

My curioſity prompted me to approach nearer. I began to ſuſpect that the uncommon paleneſs of their lean cheeks (which, when I firſt ſaw them, I imagined was occaſioned by the light of the moon ſhining full upon them) proceeded from another cauſe! I approached ſtill nearer: My head, as I hung over them, intercepted the beams of the moon. The paleneſs ſtill remained upon them! I ſtretched out my hand to awaken them——Vain mortal! it is not thy hand that can effect it! for the weight of death is fallen upon them!——My heart bled at the ſight; and, as I turned my head, an involuntary tear of compaſſion

dropped.——Perhaps, (thought I) when the light of yeſterday's ſun firſt roſe above the mountains, ſhe ſeated herſelf in this ſpot, unable to proceed farther; that at leaſt, together with her infant, ſhe might enjoy the comfortable bounty of his rays, which were then ſtreaming through yonder eaſtern window: Theſe, and a ſcanty offal of coarſe bread, were all they had to chear their drooping ſouls!—When the ſun arrived at meridian brightneſs, the little infant ſtretched out it's tender arms, and looked wiſhfully in it's mother's pallid face. She gueſſed it's meaning; and, laying it gently on the earth, haſtened to a neighbouring brook:

brook: She relieved it's wants; her own remained unſatisfied. — When the ſun was deſcending, the infant ſunk to reſt in her arms. In the firſt ſigh, it breathed away it's tender ſpirit! ——By the light of this morning's ſun, ſhe ſaw her lifeleſs infant reclining upon her breaſt!—His genial beams could not recal it's ſpirit! it had mounted too high! Through the long heat of noon ſhe lingered in affliction; a ſick and widowed mother, with an only child breathleſs in her arms! Joyleſs, hopeleſs, comfortleſs! —— When the broad moon was riſing from behind the ivy of that mouldering dome, ſhe reclined her head upon her feeble arm, reſt-

ing it on the baſe of this pillar! To the chilling breezes of the night ſhe made her moan, and ſilence alone received her lamentations! She lifted up her eyes faintly toward the ſpangled Heaven, and was about to cloſe them for ever; but hearing my approaching ſteps, would have called for pity and relief! Her ſpirits could not bear the exertion! Her livid lips cleave to each other in agony!—Death at that moment chained her tongue in everlaſting ſilence!——

I WAS now arrived at the houſe; and, upon the relation of what I had ſeen, it is not to be conceived how much

much the good Mr. W—— and his whole family were afflicted. Proper perſons were immediately diſpatched to take care of the bodies; and the next day they were carefully depoſited in the ſame grave.—I am ſince told, that there is a neat ſtone againſt the wall of the church, put up at Mr. W——'s expence; and a beautifully tender inſcription, to perpetuate their memories, written by the vicar, a man honoured and beloved for his uncommon ſenſe and humanity.

ESSAY VIII.

A MAN no ſooner ſits down, on his return home in a Winter's evening, than, releaſing his feet from the preſſure of a BOUCLE D'ARTOIS, and aſſuming, careleſsly, the cool gout-relieving ſlipper, he takes up a volume of ſome favourite author; and, ſituated in an arm-chair, leans his elbow on the table, within about a folio margin's breadth of the bottom of a bright braſs candleſtick; the book raiſed in his hand almoſt to a level with his eyes, his left-arm reſting upon the elbow of the chair,

a pair

a pair of ſteel ſnuffers in his hand, gently tapping pretty good minuet time againſt the calf of his right-leg placed careleſs upon the left-knee. In this poſture of affairs, a pleaſing train of reflections begin to riſe: He turns his head a little on one ſide from the book, and fixing his eyes ſtudiouſly vacant upon a ſmall fly, or on any other impertinent reptile, or immaterial atom, crawling or lying on the table, levels the book gradually to an horizontal poſition; with one hand gently lays down the ſnuffers, with both his elbows firmly fixed upon the arms of the chair, and letting his hands drop negligently into his lap, he ſtretches

out

out both his legs till his feet are within two inches of the fender, flings himſelf back in the chair, and looking up at a bird-cage or a ragged beam juſt over his head, travels at the rate of twelve miles an hour, through the kingdom of fancy and fiction; ſcorning the turnpikes and turnpike-roads, leaving hedge and ditch, gate and river, and all other caſual obſtructions, like the vain-glorious ſon of Glaucus, far beneath him: Or, like Satan in his flight, with head, hands, wings or feet, ſwims or ſinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies, through the perils of caſtles and phantoms, wild-beaſts and whirlwinds, foreſts, fair ladies,

and

and forked lightnings, madneſs, murder, and moonlight;

" Till all his noble ſtructures, rais'd ſo high,
" Are ſhatter'd into heaps o'er his bald head."

I MYSELF, the other evening, took a kind of hobby-horſical flight towards the caſtle of chaos, for I am very fond of true poetical maſonry; and, as I find moſt of our modern *terrible high-bred bards* have taken this old lady's manſion for a model, I thought I would at leaſt take a view of it: By way, therefore, of introduction, during my journey I compoſed the following ghaſtly ode; which I did once intend to have written with druid's blood upon

 black

black paper, and dedicated it to the ghoſt of ſome northern warrior; but I afterwards laid aſide all thoughts of that, chuſing rather to introduce it, as a model of perfect poetry, to the public, with only this it's original invocation prefixed.

Oh! all ye gently-ſighing ſpirits, who are wont, at ſome ſolemn, ſilent, curfeu-tolling hour, to ſit ſide by ſide with that mother of muſings, ſage holy contemplation, ſky-commercing with her auſtere companion, morality, upon a gloſſy couch of ivy, or a moſſy mouldering fragment marked with imperfect Runic characters

characters and ambiguous hieroglyphics; there to view, without fear of falling, fretted cielings, high-wrought columns, mitred ſaints, and ſpiral arches, dropping piece by piece to decay, and have ſeen them at laſt drop into oblivion!——Oh! all ye more dreadful Gorgon ſpirits, who have dared through horror and howlings to pry into the uneſſential womb of hubbub and diſtraction; or, by the winking glimmer of the ſtars, the dim moon impending bloodily eclipſed, have tumbled over and rumaged all the dreary myſteries of nature and time,

marking their different tempers, looks and changes, ever ſince the golden compaſſes deſcribed their circle; and will continue to attend and mark them, till they are grand-climacterical!——O be propitious to my thrice-muttered invocation!

THE pearly queen of night has bow'd
Her orb beneath a ſable cloud,
Whoſe tawny ſkirts reflected gleam
Acroſs the ſmooth, unruffled ſtream;
And through the dim miſt of the vale
Slowly ſlide the ſpectres pale!
The ſolemn bell, from Ichnon's tow'r,
With iron tongue proclaims the hour;
And murm'ring low, with hollow chime,
Echoes to the voice of time!

Rouz'd

Rouz'd by the ſound, through thickeſt night,
The dun bat rears her doubtful flight;
And, as the diſtant tempeſt ſcowls,
The grey wolf through the foreſt howls!
——Hark! heard ye not that piercing yell,
From yon dreary, yawning cell!
Come, thou hideous phantom, come!
From the murd'rer's recent tomb!
Thy wildly vacant eye-balls flaſhing,
Thy iron fangs with fury gnaſhing!
While down thy tatter'd garments pour
Lingering ſtreams of clotted gore!
Let me claſp thee to my breaſt,
In all theſe Gorgon terrors dreſt!
Now, while the angry thunders roll,
And horror ſhakes my thrilling ſoul!
Come, thou hideous phantom, come!
From the murd'rer's recent tomb!
Bring reſtleſs pain, with haggard eye,
Diſtreſs, and writhing agony!

Quivering

Quivering lips, and viſage hoar!
While cold drops ſtart from ev'ry pore!
Bring mailed ſlaughter, at whoſe ſide
Death ſmiles, and unchain'd furies ride!
Deſtruction wild before his car
Wields dreadful inſtruments of war;
Through fire and ſmoke whole nations fly,
And towns in ſmoking ruins lie!
While round him flows, in conſtant flood,
A wide circumference of blood!—
Come revenge! grim phantom, come!
And leave the murd'rer's recent tomb!
——High poſted on the whirlwind's blaſt,
(Spreading plagues as on they paſt)
Two ſiſter furies thundering rode
To yon dank and drear abode!
I ſaw them ride the pinion'd ſtorm!
I ſaw them claſp the hideous form!
And now in triple knot they're gone
To the deep pit of Acheron!

——See!

——See! before Hell's maſſy gate,
They weave the web of Norway's fate;
And, muttering ſlow the myſtic ſound,
The pale flame glimmers on the ground!
——" Let the warrior, Marvon, bleed;
" Another ſhall his loſs ſucceed!——
" See! ſiſters, ſee! 'tis done, 'tis done!—
" Marvon falls!——The web is ſpun!"

ESSAY IX.

IT is a great comfort to thoſe who want a good natural underſtanding, that they may be furniſhed with materials for converſation out of every coffee-houſe in the city. Numberleſs are the ways by which men of this ſtamp acquire their temporary knowledge. It is no unuſual thing, to ſee one of theſe evening poſts ſitting cloſe behind a knot of clever fellows, ſwallowing down coffee and converſation with the greateſt perſeverance. To prevent being ſuſpected of liſtening, he with great

great vacancy of attention fixes his eyes upon ſome newſpaper or magazine, and takes particular care, by ſmiles or frowns, and a variety of other important geſticulations and grimaces, to ſignify his approbation or diſlike of certain imaginary paſſages. I remember, I once caſt my eye upon a pamphlet which one of theſe gentlemen was reading, and in which he ſeemed very much intereſted; you may ſuppoſe I was not a little ſurprized, to find it contained nothing more nor leſs than an exact liſt of the Wiltſhire juſtices for the year 1764. I muſt confeſs, I never thought there was much humour or groteſque imagery in any ſimple

catalogue of names, before I ſaw this gentleman ready to ſplit his ſides with laughter at the peruſal of them. A man of ſuch an uncommonly happy temper is never at a loſs for entertainment: For he can draw pleaſant jokes out of a piece of blank paper; and find ſufficient matter for amuſement and laughter, whether he read Hudibras, or the Farrier's Vade Mecum.

This is one method they uſe to cloathe themſelves with wiſdom—which is of ſuch a nature, that if it be laid by will ſoon become uſeleſs and unfaſhionable: It muſt be diſplayed immediately, or never. I would

would recommend it, therefore, to all thoſe who frequent theſe never-failing magazines of coffee and intelligence, for this purpoſe, to take the earlieſt opportunity of diſengaging their minds from theſe extempore burdens: But, at the ſame time, I would have them very careful to reconnoitre the faces of the company; leaſt, like a poor unfortunate gentleman I once met, they let off their anecdotes before people who are freſh from the room where they were firſt related.

The Romans had an eaſy and ready method to get rid of news or opinions before they got ſtale and

unſeaſonable: It was but mounting the roſtrum, and the whole town was immediately informed. I think, our market-croſſes would not be ill applied to this purpoſe: And I have often perſuaded myſelf, in ſpite of hiſtorians and commentators, that they were originally deſigned to anſwer the ſame end as the roſtrum in the Roman forum; where ſenators and ſhoemakers, prime-miniſters and paſtry-cooks, had all the equal liberty of delivering their ſentiments and opinions.

Lord Shaftſbury ſays, that converſation is the hot-bed of the imagination. The ſame may be ſaid of coffee-

coffee-houſes, that they are the hot-beds of converſation. It is here that many a weak underſtanding is prematurely forced into a ſtate of artificial perfection never deſigned for it by nature; and many a man who frequents theſe places will from others acquire a very plauſible manner of relating facts, and debating politics, who, were he queſtioned, would abſolutely be incapable of telling the ſituation of his own country, or whether it was Harry the eighth, or Mr. Pope, who brought about the Reformation.

These men put me very much in mind of a character which at preſent greatly

greatly prevails among us, your title-page ſcholar; who gathers all his knowledge from bookſellers ſhops and catalogues. This man ſcorns common authors, which every ſnivelling ſchool-boy is acquainted with; and imagines the world will be blind enough to judge of the depth of his erudition from the obſoleteneſs of the books with which he affects to be converſant. He enters a coffee-houſe, and, with the moſt inſignificant auſterity of countenance, paſſes judgment upon Caſaubon, Barovius, or Strabo, over a diſh of tea; and, without the leaſt regard to decency or good-manners, provided he can ſhew his knowledge, will at dinner-

time

time deſcribe the nature of the SPINA DORSALIS, acroſs the table.—I would have ſuch a fellow well whipped for betraying ſo pitiful an ambition, that he might remain IN TERROREM to all other ſneaking ſimulars of perfection.

ESSAY X.

A Man who is fond of muſical compariſons may ſay thus — A ſolo is a very ſtriking reſemblance of the city of Jeruſalem, as David deſcribes it in the Pſalms, at perfect unity with itſelf.—A duet I compare to a couple of ſincere friends; who, though of as oppoſite diſpoſitions as a flute and a baſs-viol, may, by conſtantly obſerving each other's ſtops and movements, live very amicably together.—I know of nothing a trio is like, unleſs it be the three graces; but then the compariſon holds

holds good, if I compare it to the three weird ſiſters.—A quartetto I deteſt; and think it a kind of proportion in harmony, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) rather forced than natural. I no more believe that four ſuch inſtruments as I once was unlucky enough to hear united, were intended by nature to be companions to each other's ſounds; than that I and the tallow-chandler, Mrs. Kitty the cook, and Maſter Jacky who was going to ſchool, were deſigned, from the creation of the world, to jolt together VIS A VIS in the Exeter ſtage-coach: And yet, though we had no more connection with each other before than the four

inſtruments, when we had moved two miles, we were jumbled into ſuch perfect harmony, that for the laſt twenty of our journey we made ſhift to ſupport a moſt admirable quartetto.——It would be endleſs to go through a regular courſe of theſe compariſons; I ſhall therefore conclude, by comparing a full chorus to a ſett of friendly brothers of the ancient and honourable knot of free and accepted maſons.

ESSAY XI.

THERE is nothing which requires greater minuteneſs and delicacy, than the deſcription of a private character. We may indulge our fancies on ſubjects of a more general nature: But here we are bound by juſtice and humanity to to trace with an impartial hand the exact features of our original. An error on either ſide is equally unpardonable. If it be a crime to deform a virtuous character, by caſting over it a ſhade of vice and immorality; it is not leſs faulty, to blazon deceitfulneſs and guilt with

the falſe colouring of integrity and virtue.——Though, upon ſecond conſideration, I think the latter of the two has ſome little excuſe for his unjuſt deviation. We underſtand the nature and power of flattery too well to deny him this ſubterfuge. I muſt confeſs, I ſhould be much ſurprized to find it otherwiſe. Vanity, from which I believe few hearts are free, will not ſuffer us to condemn him: And, whatever objections the more grave and moral part of mankind may affect to have againſt this natural failing, there are few who would not prefer the good, the puiſſant, and the wiſe, before obſcurity and oblivion.

THE excellent artifice of the painter who ſuited a Venus or an Apollo to the countenances and figures of all his cuſtomers, according to their ſex, gained him much greater reputation than if he had repreſented them juſtly, with all their ſeveral beauties and deformities; and at the ſame time ſerves to prove, that flattery is the neceſſary road to eminence and proſperity.

SINCE, then, we muſt allow it a difficult and hazardous undertaking, to delineate impartially the character of another; what care and circumſpection is required, to draw forth our own natural virtues and defects

to

to public obſervation!—In this caſe we are ſeldom ſo blind as to tranſgreſs on the ugly ſide of the character, and an error on the other is doubly criminal. Self-flattery is deſpicable, as it is generally the companion of meanneſs and inſignificancy, and ends to the diſadvantage of the poſſeſſor.

A LEARNED French author relates a ſtory of an Eaſtern prince, who, when about to have a ſtatue decreed him for ſome ſervice he had rendered his country, being of an ugly and deformed ſtature, ordered the ſculptor to overlook his defects, that he might be repreſented to poſterity as a handſome, well-proportioned man.

—The

—The conſequence of this fooliſh piece of vanity was, that many years after, either through ignorance or miſtake, his ſtatue was deſtroyed with thoſe of the tyrants, and his name and virtues overthrown and forgotten by the very means he uſed to preſerve and augment them.

THERE is much more real ſatisfaction in beholding a good likeneſs taken from the life, than in all the wild excurſions of fancy in the regions of fiction and extravagance. How many there are who can ſucceed in a Jupiter Tonans on the one hand, or a Jeremiah Sago on the other; but how few who, like a Reynolds

or

or a Gainſborough, can trace the juſt proportion of feature; and ſtrongly mark the prevailing line of a character, without once wandering out into ridicule or caricature!

AND now, my dear Readers, we are arrived at the end of our journey——Good Heavens! what a collection of wrinkled foreheads and clinched fiſts! What vehement invectives and furious geſticulations are theſe?——Well, well; ſneer, ſtamp, and exclaim as much as you pleaſe, every perſon among ye would find his time much better beſtowed in this manner, than in grinning in coffee-houſes, yawning in window-ſeats, or gaping at print-ſhops.

FINIS.